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UNCLAS VILNIUS 000994

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

STATE FOR EUR/NB

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [MOPS](#) [LH](#)

SUBJECT: GOL PRESENTS ITS VERSION OF THE SU-27 CRASH

REF: VILNIUS 993

1. (SBU) The Lithuanian MFA delivered to the embassy a nonpaper describing the GOL's version of the events surrounding the crash of the Russian SU-27 in Lithuania (reftel). The account particularly highlights Russian authorities' alleged failure to provide accurate information about the plane, in particular the presence of missiles and dangerous materials aboard, their general lack of cooperation, and other behavior "contrary to the strategic partnership between the EU and Russia." Full text of the nonpaper follows.

2. (U) Begin text:

As you know, on Thursday, September 15, 2005, at approximately 1500 hrs (local time), a Russian military fighter aircraft Su 27, crossed Lithuanian border, fell down and crashed in Sakiai district, in the western part of Lithuania, some 50 kilometers west of Kaunas. There were no casualties and no human injuries as the plane crashed in a field away from any settlement. The pilot of the plane landed safely. Russia's Defense Ministry has apologized to Lithuania for the incident and pledged to compensate all related damages.

Lithuania has started investigation of the illegal border crossing and incident with plane crashing. Russian experts were invited to participate as observers in the investigation. Investigation has started September 16, and Russian experts arrived in the evening of the same day. Their (sic) visited crash site, participated in the questioning of the pilot. Unfortunately, Russian experts refused to give information on armament or hazardous materials on the plane, refused to give other information about the flight - parameters, pilot talks with the command center. In short, Russia does not cooperate in the investigation. The very fact of presence of air-air missiles was not confirmed until the recovery moment.

Nevertheless, on September 19, 2005, Lithuania received a note from Russia where it states, that does (sic) not recognise Lithuanian jurisdiction in the investigation of the incident, that pilote (sic) and the rests (sic) of the fighter have an immunity and shall be immediately returned to Russia. Russia ignored Lithuanian request to explain these statements.

Furthermore, on September 20, 2005, Russia informed, that in relation with the investigation of fighter crash in Lithuania it cancels a meeting of the Intergovernmental Commission, which was scheduled to take place on September 22-23, 2005 in Palanga, Lithuania.

Lithuania would like to state, it is stunned with Russian statements on jurisdiction and considers that Russian behaviour is contrary to the strategic partnership between the EU and Russia and it demonstrates Russia's unwillingness to cooperate with some EU countries on an equal partners basis.

Lithuania will maintain its constructive approach in the investigation, which will be carried according to the Lithuanian and international law. We hope, that our calm and non conflictive position will be understood and supported by partners.

REVAD, Rusijos sk.

End Text

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